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T1TLE: Does Crack Use After HIV Diagnosis Predict High Risk Sexual Behaviors? Differences Between Men and Women

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BACKGROUND: Crack cocaine use has been associated with high risk sexual behaviors that may lead to I acquisition of HIV. In this study, we examined whether crack use after HIV diagnosis predicted high risk ~sexual behaviors that might lead to transmission of HIV.

METHODS: Analysis of cross-sectional interviews of persons 218 yrs of age reported with HIV/AIDS to 12 state/local health depts. during June 1990-Nov. 1998. Logistic regression models were created for men and women with crack use before and after HIV diagnosis as the main predictor for each of four high risk sexual behaviors, adjusting for age, race/ethnicity, HIV status, education, and injecting drug use in the past year.

RESULTS: Of 20,497 HIV/AIDS patients interviewed, 14,385 (70%)never used crack, 2,190 (11%)used crack before HIV diagnosis but not after, and 3,922 (19%)used crack after HIV diagnosis. For men who ha i ever used crack (2,807 of 15,902 men interviewed, 27%), the proportion who had engaged in sexual risk behaviors was significantly higher for those who had used crack after vs. before HIV diagnosis: unprotected sex w/steady partner since HIV diagnosis, 45%vs. 35%(adjusted odds ratio [AOR]1.6); unprotected sex I w/non-steady partners since HIV diagnosis, 44%vs 35%(AOR 1.6); having multiple sex partners in the past year, 60%vs. 55%(AOR 1.2); and exchanged sex for money/drugs in the past 5 years, 24%vs. 14%(AOR 1.9). For female crack users (1,608 of 4,595 women interviewed, 35%). there were no significant differences for those who used crack after vs. before HIV diagnosis in unprotected sex w/steady partner (56%vs. 49%). unprotected sex w/non-steady partners (49%vs. 40%) and multiple sex partners (46%vs. 42%); a significant difference was seen for exchanged sex for money/drugs in the past 5 years, 48%vs. 27%, (AOR 2.4).

CONCLUSIONS: A higher portion female users engaged in high risk sexual behaviors compared with male crack users. We observed a reduction in the proportion of male crack users who engaged exchanged sex for money/drugs if they did not use crack after HIV diagnosis. This information suggest that stopping crack cocaine use after HIV diagnosis may be valuable for reduction of sexual risk behaviors among HIV-infected persons.

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